

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OPEN AMIDST CONTROVERSIES

Catholic schools are opening to a range of controversies this year. For example, a lesbian couple in Eugene, Oregon has made a formal complaint to the Eugene Human Rights Commission charging that O'Hara Catholic School has refused admission to their 4-year-old daughter because of their sexual orientation.

Meanwhile, Regina High School in the Cleveland area is being pressed by the Council on American Islamic Relations to reconsider its dress code: the school decided not to allow a Muslim student who wears the Muslim head scarf (the hijab) to return to school.

Catholic League president William Donohue offered the following remarks today:

"Both of these incidents involve the right of Catholic educators to exercise their autonomy. It does not matter that some object to their decisions: what matters is their constitutionally protected right to make decisions that accord with Catholic teachings.

"To ask a governmental agency to intervene in the internal affairs of Catholic schools shows utter contempt for the principle of separation of church and state. Similarly, the spectacle of having a Muslim civil rights organization lobby a Catholic school to accommodate Islamic strictures is as preposterous as having the Catholic League pressure Islamic schools to accommodate the dietary requirements of Catholic students during Lent.

"If diversity means anything, it means that one size does not fit all. This is especially true when applied to religious institutions."